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TO ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHAP/AMEMBASSY APIA PRIORITY 1496

RUEHBD/AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN PRIORITY 8487

RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 4879

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1790

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 5968

RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI PRIORITY 6095

RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 0714

RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 6098

RUEHKN/AMEMBASSY KOLONIA PRIORITY 2214

RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY KOROR PRIORITY 1769

RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 3397

RUEHJM/AMEMBASSY MAJURO PRIORITY 6996

RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY 3485

RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY 0546

RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 2054

RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 9182

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 2505

RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY 2288

RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 8503

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1483

RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR PRIORITY 7662

RUEHVN/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY 4995

RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0724

RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 4417

RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 1796

RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 1007

RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 1102

RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY PRIORITY 3868

RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 7803

RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA PRIORITY 0450

RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 1183

RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 3725

RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH PRIORITY 0811

RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 0882

RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI PRIORITY 4384

RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 8905

RUEHJS/AMCONSUL SURABAYA PRIORITY 0776

RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY PRIORITY 3877

RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 5384

INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 8122

RHMFIS/JJOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT HAS HISTORIC MEET WITH ASEAN LEADERS

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On November 15 in Singapore, President Obama participated in the first U.S. - Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Leaders, Meeting with all 10 ASEAN countries. The meeting was an opportunity to highlight increased U.S. engagement with ASEAN and the region generally. Key outcomes of the meeting will be more cabinet-level interactions between U.S. and ASEAN counterparts, creation of an eminent persons group and cooperation on climate change, disaster assistance and human rights. The President also used the meeting to press on human rights in Burma. Participating nations expressed strong appreciation for the United States, greater attention to the region and called for more cooperation in a range of areas. Notably, Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet said in his remarks that the United States had critical security role to play in the region; Malaysian Prime Minister Najib

Razak asked for U.S. Peace Corps assistance to ASEAN,s efforts to create a comparable ASEAN Volunteers program; and Burmese Prime Minister Thein Sein spoke on the importance of cooperation in climate change. The clear message from the Leaders, Meeting was the increased U.S. focus on ASEAN and the Asian region - a message well received by the participating leaders. End Summary.

An Historic Meeting

12. (U) On November 15, in Singapore, for the first time a U.S. President met with all 10 ASEAN leaders. The Leaders, Meeting served to highlight increased U.S. engagement with ASEAN countries and Asia generally, and to recognize ASEAN,s growing potential as a partner on global issues. This meeting capped two earlier visits by Secretary Clinton to the region, including a visit to the ASEAN Secretariat in February and the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) between the United States and ASEAN in July. ASEAN,s participation in this year,s G-20 was a significant milestone in ASEAN,s emergence onto the global stage, though the President stopped short of inviting ASEAN participation in future meetings.

13. (U) The Leaders, Meeting Joint Statement outlined the U.S. commitment to expand interactions, including another

STATE 00122429 002 OF 003

Leaders, Meeting in 2010 and additional cabinet-level meetings, such as with Energy Secretary Chu and U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Kirk and their counterparts.

(Note: The full text of the Joint Statement is available at <http://asean-us-partnership.org/uploads/asean-us-leaders-meeting-joint-statement.pdf>. End Note.) The United States will also consult on the ASEAN Defense Minister (ADMM) Plus mechanism to determine whether that may serve as a future Secretary-level interaction. In addition, the United States and ASEAN will establish an eminent persons group to include notables from the business community, former government service and academia. This group will raise the profile of U.S.-ASEAN cooperation, identify areas for additional initiatives and report back to the leaders on their recommendations.

14. (U) Key areas for future cooperation included disaster management, human rights and climate change. The recent spate of natural disasters in the region prompted a focus on disaster preparedness in the Joint Statement. Programs identified were support for an ASEAN multi-hazard early warning system, public-private partnership for pandemic preparedness and for the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). To assist ASEAN,s efforts on human rights, the United States will continue its support to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and to the creation of a non-governmental Human Rights Resource Center for ASEAN (AHRRC), which will be hosted at the University of Indonesia and linked to a network of universities throughout ASEAN. U.S. assistance will also be directed to climate change, with funding for a climate change advisor at the ASEAN Secretariat and for ASEAN,s efforts to create and implement a climate change work plan.

The Push On Burma

15. (SBU) Using the Leaders, Meeting as an opportunity to speak directly to the ASEAN leaders and PM Thein Sein, President Obama called for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners, and for the Burmese government to seek reconciliation with opposition and ethnic groups. U.S. negotiators had attempted to include in the Joint Statement language calling for the release of Aung San Suu

Kyi and other political prisoners but a consensus position could not be achieved. Importantly, the Joint Statement

STATE 00122429 003 OF 003

does call for a dialogue among all Burmese stakeholders to ensure a fully inclusive political process in the lead-up to the 2010 elections, and references the July 2009 42nd Foreign Ministers meeting Communiqué, which calls for the release of political prisoners in Burma.

Positive Reactions

¶6. (SBU) In their statements all the ASEAN Leaders expressed appreciation for increased U.S. engagement with ASEAN. Notable statements included the emphasis by the Vietnamese President on the importance of the U.S. role in supporting regional security. (Comment: Such a view expressed by a Vietnamese leader reflects a significant change in that country's perspective of the regional geo-political situation and the general security concerns expressed by Vietnamese officials in other settings. End Comment) Malaysian PM Najib asked for U.S. Peace Corps support for the ASEAN Volunteer program which, similar to the Peace Corps, will deploy young volunteers within ASEAN to disadvantaged areas to assist community development. Burmese PM Thein Sein spoke on the need for cooperation with the U.S. on climate change and the environment.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) The Leaders, Meeting served the key purpose of demonstrating an enhanced U.S. engagement with the ASEAN region. The President's presence and commitment for another meeting in 2010 were seen as tangible indications of this new engagement as were the other commitments to cabinet-level interactions. The ASEAN leaders, remarks reflected a consistent recognition that in a range of critical areas, from regional security to climate change, the United States is an important partner. To sustain this new level of interaction, resources and effort will need to be directed to implementing all aspects of the joint statement such as on the Eminent Persons Group and visits by the Human Rights Commissioners.
CLINTON